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ABSTRACT

Unlike other fields, especially non-arts areas, dance students do not decide to be scholars early in their dance studies. They enter undergraduate and then graduate study because they want to dance and they later awaken to the fact that if they want to continue in the profession they will probably have to teach. The prospect of scholarship often does not enter the picture. And one reason is the lack of role models. A dance student going on to graduate work encounters few faculty who are actively engaging in scholarly work. Our graduate institutions are not really producing scholars to the extent that they should, given the growth of dance in recent years, and when there is an individual with potential for making a contribution, the positions available do not build in time and support for research. Several charts are included. (JD)

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE SCHOLARS GONE...

Long Time Passing...*

by

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A scholar - a learned and erudite individual who has profound knowledge of a particular subject. Who are these people in our field? Where do they come from? And more importantly, where are they going? While the choreographers compose and the dancers dance who is tracing the roots of our art, or probing its societal and cultural context, or analyzing its movement styles, establishing its scientific base or uncovering its educational values?

In 1980 I undertook a project for NDA to compile Research III, a listing of dance graduate research completed in higher education since 1971, the date of the last compilation. Fifty institutions responded to a request for information on master theses and projects and dissertations titles. A computer search and manual search was done of Dissertation Abstracts International, and journals, publications and bibliographies were scoured to obtain as complete a picture of graduate work as possible. Chart #1 gives the number of theses and dissertations with a dance emphasis that were done from 1901, then from 1971 to 1981. In the latter span of ten years almost the same number was completed as for the previous 70 years. These numbers represent minimum figures since some institutions with active graduate

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Insert Chart #1 About Here

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* National Dance Association "Scholar's Address" published in Spotlight on Dance AAHPERD, Vol. 11, No. 3, May, 1985

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programs did not respond. Two hundred fifty six doctoral degrees reported since 1971 is a substantial number and an unknown number have been completed since 81. My question - Where have all the scholars gone? What are these people doing now? Where is the scholarly work that we might predict would come from people who have spent years preparing to do just that? Although I have no data on this I suspect that few have continued in research and developed a special focus. I would also guess that very few have even published their dissertations.

This is not a criticism of the individuals attached to those numbers. Rather it is a statement of distress at the state of the profession and the institutional mileau which is ambivalent about dance scholarship and thus, does not sufficiently encourage or provide the means to pursue scholarly work in higher education. And if it doesn't happen there it will not happen anywhere.

Now there is an encouraging part to the picture since there has been a blossoming of research interest if not subsequent publication. This chart (#2) is a rank order of the origin of many of the 256 doctorates from

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Insert Chart #2 About Here

1971-81. These ten schools represent 42% or 109 of the doctoral degrees granted in those years. The remaining doctoral studies came from institutions such as Ohio State, Brigham Young, University of Massachusetts, University of Georgia, Boston University, Temple, University of Illinois, Wayne State,

University of Arizona, and Northwestern, which had five or less each. It is a fascinating phenomenon that only 72 or 28% of the dissertations came from institutions (*) which had doctoral programs in dance[1]. These might be explained several ways. Dance students may have attended an institution without a doctoral program in dance but were able to focus their research in dance while taking a degree in another field. For example, an individual in a graduate program in anthropology might study the developing dance forms in an American Indian tribe. Or, individuals who were truly enrolled in another field chose to use an aspect of dance as part of their studies as in the instance of the exercise physiologist who compares the cardiorespiratory efficiency of dancers and athletes.

On the masters level the numbers represent not only theses but projects and choreographic events which may satisfy the requirements for masters or M.F.A. degrees. Fourteen institutions produced 753 or 76% of the masters

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Insert Chart #3 About Here

Although I did not have sufficient information about N.Y.U. or Ohio State, I suspect they would be in this above group as well.

In Research III there were 158 subject categories and this next chart (#4) shows the rank order of the topic areas with the highest total number of titles since 1901 and the percentage produced during 1971-81.

Insert Chart #4 About Here

Note that in 6 of the 11 categories over 50% of the work was recent and in the therapy, performance and creativity categories over 80% was completed since 1971. Choreography was the largest subject area and graphically you can see that from 1965 to 1970 there were more than double the number of

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Insert Chart #5 About Here

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titles listed from 1901 to 1964. Again, in the last decade there was a substantial increase. The white bar line at the top indicates that proportion of choreographic titles which were written theses or projects about choreography - roughly 15%. The rest were concert or choreographic/performance presentations.

The 70's saw new topics of research which I categorized in the following charts for ease of presentation. Under Special Populations the contributions of blacks to dance were being more visibly chronicled and there was a new

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Insert Chart #6 About Here

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interest in the handicapped and geriatric members of society. Body Oriented research found a place with contemporary concerns with fitness, dance injuries, kinesiology, and psycho-physical techniques. The Management aspects of dance gained attention with titles related to

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Insert Chart #7 About Here

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administration, the audience and dance companies. Some beginning work was started on Movement Anaslysis with the use of biomechanics and Laban Movement Analysis and Effort/Shape. There were also new singlular subject areas - improvisation, film, lighting, mime and sports and dance which had not appeared with any significance prior to 1971.

A look at this summary is heartening. The numbers were larger than I would have guessed and new areas are being developed. But is this work producing the scholars we need? I do not believe we are seeing the fruits of that labor.

Let's look at a typical scholar - one not in dance. A profile would show us a man (and more recently a woman as well) who received a doctorate by the age of 26 and who had produced several scholarly articles even during graduate work. By the age of 30 this scholar had a lengthy vita of published work and a national reputation. He is working at a university, has received institution and federal grants, and has a number of graduate students in his laboratory or research area who are adding to his data collection for his ongoing studies as well as forging their own way in the publish and perish world of academe. He is listed as a co-author on his students studies and they are listed on his. He regularly presents papers in symposia with other experts in his field, he sits on the editorial board of a scholarly journal or two and depending on his field, he is sought after as a consultant both inside and outside education. And for this he receives additional financial remuneration.

And what about dance? My portrait of the typical dance scholar is a woman who has spent her late teens and 20's as a student, a dancer, and often as a teacher. She returned to school and received her doctorate in her mid to late 30's. She is alone in her specialty of investigation. There is probably no one within her own institution and few nationally with whom she can share ideas, information or research projects. No one else is studying the same question from another viewpoint and no one else is adding to the data which would aid her to build a base of information for ongoing and valid inquiry.

Her research area or laboratory, if it exists, is makeshift or shared. If she needs specialized equipment or materials, it is not easy to come by. Grants for the arts and humanities are scarce. As for graduate students, there are some working under her advisement but they usually are masters students who are not really specializing or planning to continue in a scholarly direction. The doctoral students are really the ones who will probe and focus their energies but there are so few universities with doctoral programs that a group of such students is still a dream for most research oriented faculty. Her schedule allows little time for writing. Her teaching load is heavy and she may try to keep up with her art by continuing to perform and choreograph.

What happens to this dance scholar? If she is highly motivated and has research questions which excite her, she persists and publishes on an ongoing but periodic basis. If the drive is not there she continues the other pursuits which are already consuming and moves away from writing.

If the profile I propose is accurate it is no wonder we do not have the level of research we so desperately need. To build our discipline we must have facts and theory and a constant growing interrelationship between the two. We need creative individuals who dig into a subject until they have the knowledge and skills that create the groundwork for discovery and we need more people to come at the same topic from different perspectives so that there is a continuous generation of data, a growing data base, and constant theory building. Ideas beget ideas beget more ideas and so forth.

Several investigators tackling a topic not only increases the chances to piggy back ideas on the theoretical level but it promotes the opportunities for developing methodologies, and tools that are so desperately needed and that others can use, test and refine. For example, my current interest is in developing a methodology for recording and analyzing movement behavior. After years of watching video taped movement to collect data on creative movement, I did obtain the data, but I also accumulated countless hours of watching the same movements again and again while I tried to view a movement and make marks on a tally sheet. Since you cannot do both simultaneously you repeat and repeat. I collected some data and a great deal of marked up paper. The marks had to be hand counted, hand written onto large data sheets and then manually key punched onto computer cards for further analysis. The computer was only a part of the last stage.

Now, the defined variables I wish to view are given coding labels which are entered onto an electronic keyboard to instantaneously record a behavior as I watch it on tape. I can record a number of elements in a category labeled

locomotion, for example, in a single continuous pass of the video tape while not taking my eyes off the monitor since I am letting my fingers do the walking so to speak. The data from numerous passes are electronically transcribed onto a microcomputer and processed through a grammer or set of syntactic rules which allows the complex coding system to be formatted in real time to the 20th of a second and error corrected. The stored data can then be analyzed with programs that will produce descriptive statistics or locate recurrent patterns of key movement behaviors. While I will be using this system to study creativity, what is exciting is that others could use it for style analysis or for examining client-practitioner behaviors in dance therapy or for any number of problems where it is important to objectify and quantify movement behavior.

To quote this year's Heritage Honoree Aileene Lockhart: "Research is not an 'ivory tower' activity. It is imaginative, disciplined, inventive and creative."[2] It takes time to acquire research skills and to assimilate and synthesize knowledge. In most institutions, including some that have doctoral programs, the person who is interested in scholarship is also expected to carry a heavy teaching and service load and often performing and choreographing or administration responsibilities. Given the state of the field I am surprised anything gets published.

Before I lay the blame at the feet of the institutions, let me say that the dancer himself or herself unknowingly contributes to this schizophrenic state of affairs. Unlike other fields, especially non-arts areas, dance students do not decide to be scholars early in their dance studies. They

enter undergraudate and then graduate study because they want to dance and they later awaken to the fact that if they want to continue in the profession they will probably also have to teach.

The prospect of scholarship often does not enter the picture. And one reason is the lack of role models. A dance student going on to graduate work encounters few faculty who are actively engaging in scholarly work. At the masters level the usual expectation for most faculty is toward artistic endeavors rather than scholarly ones. And even in doctoral situations, the faculty themselves may wish to continue dancing and composing. We want it all! After all, the heart of an art is doing it. But, deep down we know we cannot do it all and maintain quality and our sanity.

This understandable schizophrenia perpetuates the problem of establishing scholarship as a primary vehicle of productivity for some faculty. Our graduate institutions are not really producing scholars to the extent that they should, given the growth of dance in recent years and when there is an individual with potential for making a contribution the positions available do not build in time and support for research.

We are caught. Institutions want people with doctorates but they do not provide positions which will allow a person to do research. To achieve tenure they do want publications but the actual job is directed more to teaching, curriculum building, performance or choreography and, of course, many hours of service, all of which are needed as we struggle to maintain our departments. Because we have not established the value and necessity of scholarship the

expectations for dance faculty have not changed. The dance faculty member is all things to all people. And, we indeed have helped to continue this myth. We have run from the studio to the stage to the classroom to the committee meeting but only occasionally or not at all to the laboratory or library or our own writing desk.

What can we do? There is no single solution but there are some steps to take. We could provide earlier career direction on the possibilities for dance scholarship. Students in our programs want to dance, but we know that not everyone will succeed professionally in the dance world. Encourage the option for writing and research as you find students who can verbalize about dance poetically or analytically. As we produce more students who are really excited about dance scholarship, the jobs they take will begin to change as they push and produce and demonstrate the seriousness and importance of what they do.

Encourage students to publish or otherwise disseminate those studies that show quality. From 1971 to 1981 over 1,200 masters and doctoral studies were completed. If 300 were concert or performance events and another 300 were projects, that still leaves 600 unaccounted for in the literature. Surely, a great number of those should be shared. I think that both students and faculty are so pleased that the degree was finished that they leave it at that and go on to other things. This, though is the time they should be pushed to share that work. How? AAHPERD is one outlet. Submit an abstract to be considered for the free papers or poster sessions sponsored by the Research Consortium. Submit an article to CORD. Look for symposia focusing

on the student's topic. Every week The Chronicle of Higher Education lists the conferences, symposia and such that are seeking papers. Search for journals outside of dance in aesthetics, anthropology, education, etc.

As a profession we should develop more outlets for publication. After reviewing the figures I just presented, isn't it incredible we have only one research journal? I know it is expensive to publish but we must keep pushing for it.

We need to change institutional expectations on faculty responsibilities in dance. The yearly job descriptions pass over my desk and I am often amazed at what is expected. In smaller programs there may not be another solution but the larger programs have to clarify what is considered productivity and then allow the time to do it. I continually see job announcements which require a doctorate but describe responsibilities more appropriate for an M.F.A. These same institutions then expect publications for tenure and are distressed when these expectations are not met. I suggest that when graduate programs consider future personnel needs they narrow the duties for some positions to allow for research time for people with doctorates.

There is a need for more doctoral programs with faculty who are actively doing research. It would be ideal if institutions would provide a special focus so a student would go to university x to study dance philosophy and university y to specialize in dance kinesiology and so forth. On this same point it is critical that students have role models so they see there are

faculty that are as dedicated to scholarly inquiry as there are to performance and choreography. Most importantly, they will see that both dance artists and dance scholars and the interaction between them are critical for us to survive as an art and a discipline. And if that happens, the scholars may come back.

ENDNOTES

These institutions (*) appeared to have doctoral programs during the time the data were collected. These programs may not all be active now and other institutions may have since added programs.

Aileene S. Lockhart, "Reflections on Dance Research" Research in Dance III, Mary Alice Brennan, ed. (Reston, VA: 1982), p. 13.

CHART 1

Dance Theses

	1970-71	1971-81	TOTAL
Doctoral	158	256	414
Masters/M.F.A.	1,172	990	2,162
	1,320	1,246	2,576

CHART 2

Doctoral Degrees 1971-81

*1. Texas Women's	26	*6. U. of North Carolina-Greensboro	9
*2. University of Wisconsin	14	7. Florida State	7
*3. New York University	13	8. Indiana University	7
4. Columbia	11	9. UCLA	6
*5. University of Southern California	10	10. Michigan	6
			109=42%

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Scholar: From Page 1

CHART 3

Masters Degrees 1971-81

1. UCLA	271	8. American University	41
2. George Washington	57	9. Loyola Mary Mt.	35
3. University of Utah	53	10. Texas Women's	34
4. University of North Carolina-Greensboro	48	11. Hahneman	30
5. Temple University	44	12. University of Colorado	29
6. University of Wisconsin	43	13. Lesley College	27
7. University of Oregon	41	14. University of Illinois	20

753 = 76%

CHART 4

HIGHEST TOTALS 1901-1981

	CATEGORY	TOTAL	Percent 1971-81
1	CHOREOGRAPHY	759	55%
2	HISTORY	249	46%
3	THERAPY	206	82%
4	MODERN DANCE	203	51%
5	ETHNIC DANCING	186	38%
6	PERFORMANCE	163	96%
7	PHILOSOPHY AND AESTHETICS	124	37%
8	BALLET	108	66%
9	MEASUREMENT AND TESTING	107	31%
10	CREATIVITY / CREATIVE	93	80%
	COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES	93	26%

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